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UNCLAS AMMAN 002061

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SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AT JORDAN-IRAQ BORDER

REF: A. A. BAGHDAD 918

[1](#)B. B. AMMAN 2046

[1](#)1. (U) Reached on March 21, Jordan,s Interior Minister, Eid al-Fayez, responded positively to the Ambassador,s request that UNHCR be granted access to the 89 Palestinian refugees now on the Jordan-Iraq border. His staff later confirmed to Ambassador that the minister had issued his authorization. UNHCR staff told poloff mid-day March 21 that they had the authorization in hand and were en-route to the border.

[1](#)2. (U) Fayez in turn asked for our help in improving communication with Iraqi counterparts; the Iraqi Interior Minister was not returning his calls. Foreign Minister al-Khateeb, in Paris, had reached Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari to convey Jordan,s position that it would not accept the refugees and asked that they be allowed to return to Iraq.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Action Request: The issue of accepting refugee flows is radioactive in Jordan; 201 Iranian Kurdish refugees formerly resident in Ramadi, for example, have remained in Iraqi-Jordanian no man's land for over 19 months. Jordan,s position, like UNHCR,s, is that allowing refugees into Jordan will only invite a cascade of Palestinians in Iraq to seek asylum in Jordan, and that a solution can only lie in providing a greater measure of security to Palestinians in Iraq or arranging their asylum in a third country better equipped to host refugees. Embassy Amman recommends engagement with Iraqi authorities to encourage Jordanian-Iraqi contacts to find a solution in support of UNHCR guidelines.

HALE